

**A COMPARATIVE ETHNOLOGICAL STUDY
OF THE RURAL SOCIETIES OF TURKEY
IRAN AND PAKISTAN**

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The similarities between some social characters, marriage customs and ceremonies of traditional rural societies of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey:

- I - There are quite a few resemblances between the family types in rural communities of all these three countries.
- II - It is also noteworthy to record a great similarity found in giftgiving transaction among the kingroups (lineages) between the rural communities of these three nations.
- III- The existence of the obligation of taking part of the kingroups in the family events, such as birth, circumcision, marriage and death, which strengthens the relationship and solidarity of the families and kingroups is one of the common traits in rural societies of these countries.
- IV- Indeed, Kinship (Lineage) is paid much attention to in both Pakistan and Turkish rural societies as well.
- V- Villages are very fond of marrying from their own village in Iran and in Turkey. Villages marry within the caste in Pakistan.
- VI- Children, especially boys are very much desired in all these three countries (with the exception that the girls are also paid much attention to and loved as well as boys in Pakistan.)

¹ An organisation which arranges the cultural relationship between the Cento countries.

- VII- Father's side is much more beloved and respected compared to the mother's in Iran and Turkey. Only the mother's side is equally well treated as the one of father's in Pakistan.
- VIII- We can quite easily follow the patrilineal system's characteristics in these countries, (Turkey, Iran) There are quite many signs which show the existence of remnants of matrilineal system in Penjabi (Pakistan).
- IX- Polygamy or plural marriage hardly occurs now since it is prohibited by law in Turkey. Although childless marriage is a common reason for a man taking a second wife in Iran and in Turkey, polygamy is still prevalent in Iran.
- X- In most of the Turkish villages, we find a type of marriage which is called "sister's exchange". This is also seen in Pakistan. But it is a less desirable form of marriage in Pakistan, as it is one of the alternatives when parents have not enough money to undertake the expenses of marriage ceremonies (a daughter or a niece may be given in exchange for a bride; this is called "vato sata" in Pakistan).
- XI- Cousin marriages (cross-cousins and parallel cousins) are one of the traditional marriage patterns which the Koran prescribes and is followed by the rural societies of these three countries.
- XII- Early marriages are still in practice in the rural communities of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. (Punjabi)
- XIII- Marrying of a widow to the brother - in - law (levirate) is one of the types of marriage resorted to in Pakistan. as well as in Turkey.

Other resemblances of marriage ceremonies and rites of the rural societies between these three countries are as follows:

- 1- Matchmakers are still playing an important part both in traditional urban class and in rural societies of Iran and Turkey.
- b - Religious marriage ceremonies take place before the civil marriages [Turkey, Pakistan and Iran].
- c - Sending a present of money as a contribution towards the wedding expenses is one of the marriage customs (Turkey and Iran)

- d - Transportation of the trousseau and a number of domestic articles in the procession to the future home of the bride are seen [Iran, Turkey,]
- e - Elaborate decoration of the bridal chamber is done in the villages of Turkey and Iran.
- f - Ceremony of the application of henna is observed (Turkey, Iran)
- g - The presentation of the Koran and a certain amount of silk at the first visit to the bride's family are made (Turkey, Iran)
- h - Entertainments and feasts taking place both in the men's and women's quarters in these countries.
- i - The poor are not neglected on these occasions (Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.)
- j - Before the dinner is served the bride goes to the bath accompanied by female relatives and friends. (Iran, Turkey)
- k - The tremendous din of the dohol (drum) is heard at intervals (in Iran and Turkey)
- l - Bride being screened of by curtain (in Turkey and in Iran)
- m - Veiling of the bride on the horse while waiting at the door of the bride - groom. (Iran, Turkey)
- n - The final ceremony is the sacrificing of sheep. This is killed as the bride steps over the threshold of her new home. The explanation given for this are as follows:
 - 1- To appease the anger of the gods or of the spirits of their ancestors.
 - 2- Or it is merely a way of sealing in blood an important act and covenant.
- o - Putting girdle on the bride by her father on the wedding day is seen (in most of turkish villages and in Iran, too)
- p - Upsetting a bowl of water on the stairs. (In Turkey and Iran)
- q - Showing great reluctance on the part of the bride towards the bridegroom, the short visit of the bride - groom to the bride in the room.

Conclusion:

The similarities between the characteristics of the social structure, such as family and kinship, of the traditional societies of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey are noteworthy common cultural particularities. Some of the similarities which I recorded in the types of marriage and marriage customs and ceremonies could be explained as being part of the cycle of Islamic culture. But there is no doubt that most of those resemblances are of common heritage, inherited by these three countries from the far past through the historical and cultural contacts, which have to be studied in details.

On the other hand, the effects and the problems caused by the modernising act on the rural family and social structure in the three countries seem to be almost the same. Although we have a few studies dealing with the cultural change in Turkey, Iran in and Pakistan, I am justified to give this definite judgement, since I am one of the few researchers who deal with this subject matter. However, the ethnological (social anthropological) studies in Turkey need more data and more deepening into these matters.